

# NOTiCIAS DEL OSO

November 11, 2009

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Berry Teachers:

Today is the first teaching strategy newsletter. Every other week will be a strategy-based newsletter because that's what you all have asked for and I'll do my best to provide it. It is my hope that you will be able to implement most - if not all - of the strategies that I provide you with in your classroom to help not only your English Language Learners, but even your English-speaking kiddos.

For those of you who have attended SIOP training, some of these techniques will sound familiar, but others will be fresh from the minds of ESL geniuses. If you have a strategy that you would like the whole staff to know, email me to make sure I include it sometime this year.

Also, thanks for being awesome.

*Erin Van Sickle*

**Next week:** Decoding TELPAS scores and what they mean for the classroom.

## ESL Tip #1 Going Through the Motions

For some of you, this tip will seem like a common sense approach. For others, it might be a little hard to imagine actually implementing in the classroom. It all rests on your particular style of teaching, as well as your personality. If you're like me, you'll already be doing this tip whether you're in front of a classroom or just at dinner with your family. Congrats, compadres, your personality has done the work for you in this arena.

### Use MOTIONS to illustrate meaning during your lessons.

Every teacher knows just how important body language is when communicating attitude, because our students do not. With our English Language Learners, the motions that we use in everyday speech is even more vital.

If you are not accustomed to using hand motions when you are talking or explaining something, my best suggestion is not to practice in a mirror - it will only make you feel silly. When I try to improve my body language, I generally watch the way that people interact with each other. I would suggest watching a teacher (or maybe just a friend at dinner) and the motions that they use to illustrate everyday language. The big, sweeping motions might seem ridiculous to you at first, but you'll fall into a rhythm soon enough.

It's not all just about everyday tasks inside the classroom, however. Often, if we put a little bit more thought into how we can present information in the most ELL-friendly way, all students would understand what we are asking for them better, which means far fewer questions in the long run.

In the following scenario, notice how much clearer the example with teacher motions is, even on paper!

### Example Scenario:

Imagine that you are sitting in a classroom where the teacher is speaking quickly and because you are an ELL student, you are not able to discern all of the teachers' words. Your teacher stands at the front of the room and reads you instructions off of an assignment sheet:

*"Take your vocabulary words and insert them into notecards. Once the words are inserted, go ahead and mix the cards before you slide them out on the desk face down. One partner will pick their first card and flip it over. Then that same person will flip over a second. If it matches, they get to keep the two cards. If it doesn't, it is the next person's turn. Once all of the cards are gone, the person with the most cards wins."*

While we, as native English speakers and teachers skilled at deciphering jargon, are able to understand what the teacher would mean, an ELL would not. However, imagine that the teacher is giving the same instructions again, but this time she (or he) is using motions to go along with every step.

*"Take your vocabulary words"*

*The teacher holds up the list of words from a previous assignment*

*"and insert them into the cards."*

*The teacher makes a grasping motion with one hand and a depositing motion with the other over a blank notecard.*

*"Once the words are inserted,"*

*The teacher pats the notecards again and nods.*

*"Go ahead and mix the cards"*

*The teacher makes a shuffling motion in the air in front of her*

*"before you slide them out on the desk face down."*

*The teacher takes the example notecards and pantomimes placing the cards face down on the table or desk.*

*"One partner will pick up their first card and flip*

*it over."*

*The teacher holds up her pointer finger and picks up one of the cards previously lying flat on the desk.*

*"Then that same person will flip over a second card."*

*The teacher flips over a second card, continuing to hold the "1" finger up in the air.*

*"If it matches, they get to keep the two cards."*

*The teacher points at the 'front' of each card and gives a thumbs-up signal.*

*"If it doesn't, it is the next person's turn."*

*She looks at the two cards, shakes her head, and motions for a student "partner" to go.*

*"Once all the cards are gone, the person with the most cards wins."*

*The teacher gives the student a large stack and holds his hand up in the air.*

## ESL Student of the Week



Name: Gisel Espino

Grade: 8th

First language: Spanish

Fun personality fact: Gisel might act like she has her head in the clouds sometimes, but she cares about her grades more than she'll admit, even to her teachers.